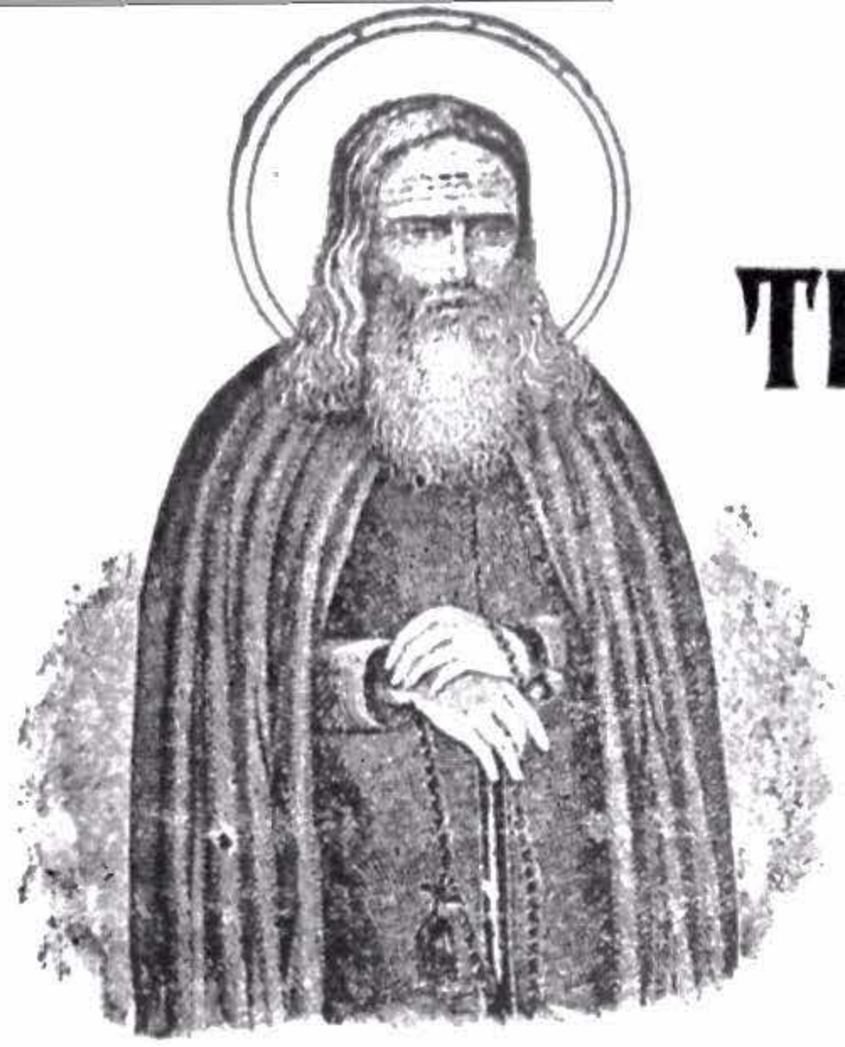
THE ORTHODOX WORD



THE ORTHODOX WORD

A Bimonthly Periodical

OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF
SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John* (*Maximovitch*), Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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COVER: The holy Cross at the entrance to the cave of St. Alexander of Svir on Valaam; in front of it stands one of the ascetics of Valaam of the last century, whose name is not known to the editors. (If any reader knows who this monk might be, he is urged to write the editors.) Pages 51 and 52: details of the 1592 icon of the Life of St. Alexander of Svir.

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In Preparation for the Canonization of Blessed Xenia

WITH THE BLESSING of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, the Blessed Xenia Memorial Fund has undertaken the task of collecting materials concerning the question of the canonization of Blessed Xenia. Some accounts by witnesses of recent cases of miraculous help by the prayers of Blessed Xenia have already been received by the Fund, and anyone else who knows of such cases is requested to write them down and send them to the Fund. The sender's name and address should be clearly indicated. If for any reason the sender wishes to remain anonymous, it is requested either that he furnish his name separately (not for publication), or that he include with his account a letter from a priest testifying that the author is a person known to him.

All materials should be sent to:

Nina A. Sinyavskaya
Blessed Xenia Memorial Fund
75 East 93rd Street
New York, New York 10028

THE LIFE OF

Saint Alexander of Svir

Abridged from the Life written in the Saint's Monastery in the year 1545, *in the* 12*th year after his repose, by his disciple Herodion, who was abbot after him. This Life is one of the primary documents of Russian hagiography, and gives the savor of the struggles of a true heavenly dweller upon earth, to whom for his purity the Holy Trinity appeared.* (*Printed in Slavonic, St. Petersburg,* 1843.)

O VENERABLE FATHERS, as the true slaves of a rich Lord and God, entreat Him that He will grant me from his unfailing treasuries a word seasoned with the salt of the Holy Spirit, and a tongue that is comprehensible, that I might boldly speak of the virtuous life of our most blessed Father Alexander, who has most gloriously shone forth now in these latest times. I have received the account of his labors not by hearsay only, but from his own venerable and holy lips, and I have heard of his labor-loving life in God from his disciples who lived with him from the first. All this I leave in writing as a priceless gift and a paternal inheritance so that those who come after us might make profitable use of it.

The parents of the blessed child, our holy Father Alexander, Stephen and Bassa, lived in the boundaries of Great Novgorod, which is now the land of Olonets, and were villagers in the village called Mandera, which is near the Ostrog monastery of the Entrance of the Most Holy Mother of God. In wealth they did not abound, but were satisfied with what they had; but in piety they shone forth above many, and they ever strove in all things to be pleasing to God. Sons and daughters were born to them, but then much time passed when no more children were born, for which the blessed Bassa was reproached by her husband. But this was according to God's Providence; for it is not possible to give birth to such a treasure, whom God chose before his conception to be an instructor in salvation for many, except by prayer and fasting. After much prayer, the pious couple went to the above-mentioned monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God, remaining there not a little time in fasting, and praying to the Mother of God. And in one night there was a certain Divine manifestation, and a voice was heard to say: "Rejoice, blessed couple; for the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall give birth to a son

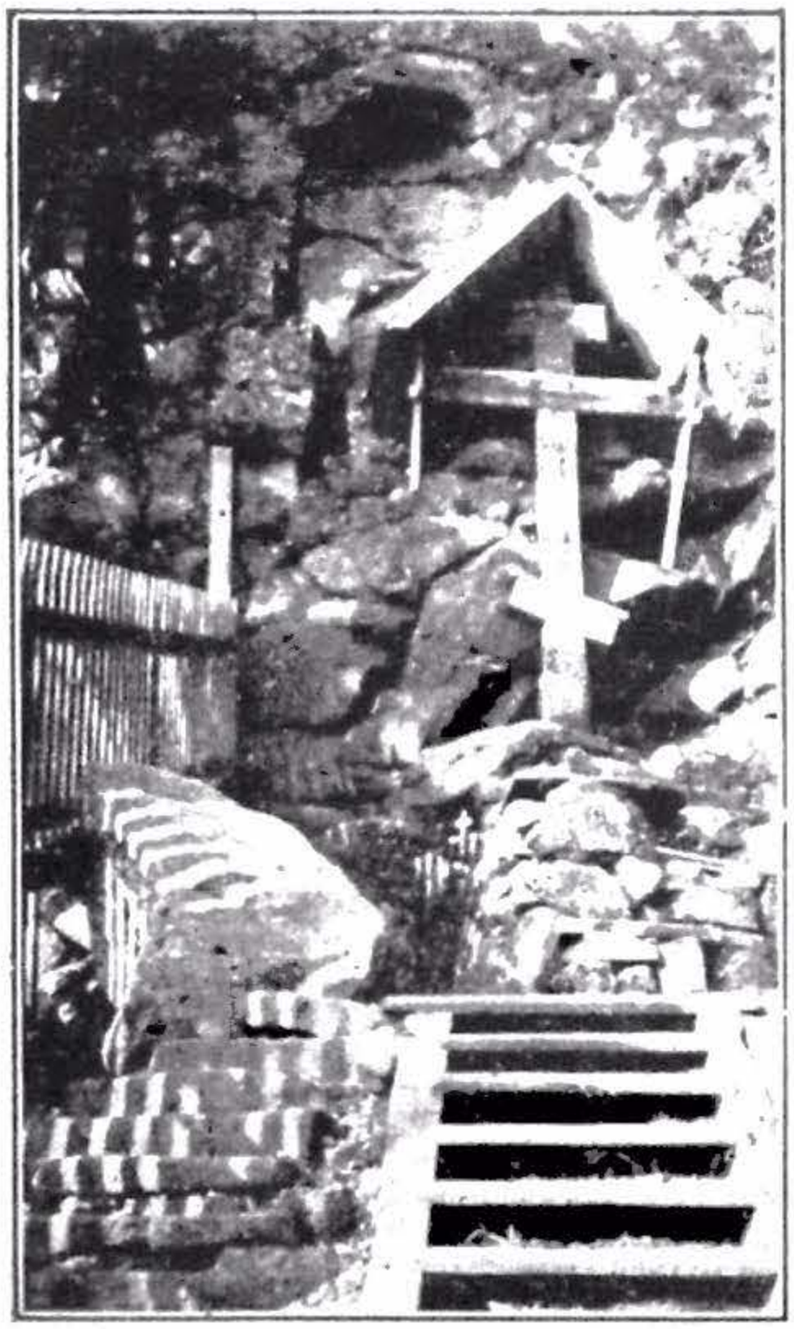
ST. ALEXANDER OF SVIR

Commemorated August 30

Troparion, Tone 4

FROM THY YOUTH, O divinely-wise one, with spiritual desire didst thou settle in the wilderness,* and didst fervently desire to go in the footsteps of Christ alone.* Wherefore even the Angelic choirs, beholding thee, were astonished* at how thou didst labor with the flesh against the invisible wiles, O wise one.* Thou didst vanquish the legions of the passions by means of continence,* and reveal thyself upon earth as equal to the Angels.* O Saint Alexander,* pray to Christ God* that He may save our souls.

"Holy Island" of Valaam, where St. Alexander labored,
seen from the main island of Valaam.



The Cross of St. Alexander
and the steps leading to the
cave where he lived and
prepared his grave on
Holy Island. Photographed
before the 2nd World War.

with the name of consolation: for God shall grant in his birth consolation to His churches."

And when the days for giving birth were fulfilled, the desired child was born to them, and they called his name Amos. This blessed child was born in the year 1449, on the 15th day of June. After a short time they gave birth to him a second time by water and the Holy Spirit. The child grew well and was filled with the Holy Spirit in the Lord.

When it came time for him to study, his parents gave him over to a certain devout man to study the Divine Scripture. But while his companions learned rapidly, this blessed child learned most slowly; and this was according to God's Providence, so that he might receive understanding from God, and not from men. One day he went to the above-mentioned monastery, to the church of the Mother of God where it was his custom always to come, and fell down before the Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, with tears and groans begging Her aid, when suddenly he heard a voice saying: "Arise, fear not; and what you have asked you shall receive." And soon he studied the Divine Scripture without difficulty and surpassed all his companions. In addition, he went every day to church, revered and obeyed his parents, and remained in great continence, wearing out his body. Every day he ate only bread, and that not to satiety, while at night he slept little, and astonished his parents greatly because of his continence. The wondrous child applied himself diligently to labor, and never did his mind incline toward the games and light-minded talk usual to children; but rather he walked about sorrowful and downcast, and to the extent that he was instructed in simplicity, so much was his mind enriched with wisdom. He was kind and meek, responsive to all and loved very much the poor, also loving greatly and revering the monastic order.

When he reached full manhood, his parents thought of arranging a marriage for him. But the divine youth was heedful ever to separate himself from all the pleasures of this world and to draw near to God alone, preferring to remain most sweetly with him. Having heard of the Monastery of the Lord's Transfiguration which is at Valaam, and being inflamed with desire to go there, he entreated the Lord that he might fulfill this desire. And the Lord, Who is near to the prayer of those who call upon Him in truth, granted in His Providence that certain monks from the Valaam Monastery should come on the business of the Monastery to the village which is near that of the parents of the blessed youth. It happened that he also was passing by this place, and seeing them from a distance standing at the river bank and singing the Psalms, he came to them and, having said a prayer, bowed down to the earth before them, saying, "Bless me, holy fathers." They were astonished at such humility and

chastity in the youth. One of them was a clairvoyant elder and filled with the Holy Spirit, and he understood the youth's purity of heart and the grace that was to be manifest in him. The divine youth questioned this elder separately about his monastery and the monks' rule of life, and the elder told him in detail of the cœnobitic life of the monastery, and also of the solitary life of silence where two or three lived together in oneness of soul, apart from the others. And the divine youth asked the elder, rivers of tears pouring forth from his eyes: "What must I do, venerable father, in order to flee this world of much disturbance and become worthy of such an angelic life?" The elder confirmed his fervent desire for the monastic life and indicated to him the way to the monastery; then, having gone to the youth's parents and conversed with them to their spiritual profit, he at last said: "Your son shall be great before the Lord and a servant of the Holy Trinity." And thus he departed from them.

The blessed youth, being filled with much zeal, and not putting off the fulfillment of his desire, fell to the feet of his parents and begged their blessing to go to a nearby village on a certain business. Having thus stolen a blessing from his parents, he left their home, having nothing but his clothing and a little bread. Having gone a little way, he stopped and wept for many hours at thus departing from his parents' home; and then he set out on his way, walking quickly and rejoicing greatly.

The blessed youth came to the river Svir, and having crossed the river he continued his way, rejoicing and giving thanks to God. That place was very desolate, and forested, and inaccessible. Night approached, and the holy youth looked about to find where he might lie down for the night. Seeing in the distance a lake, he walked to its shore. The lake was not very large, but quite beautiful, surrounded by forest on all sides as by a wall, the branches of the trees bending down to the water, and it was four miles from the river Svir. The blessed youth rejoiced in soul and stood at prayer, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ my God, direct me on the path of salvation." And having prayed for many hours with tears, he fell asleep. Immediately he heard a voice saying to him: "O youth, the path is straight for you to go where you wish to go, to the monastery of the All-merciful Saviour on Valaam; go in peace, and labor there unto the Lord for a sufficient time, and then you will be in this place and build a monastery, and many will be saved by you." With this voice a great light also appeared at the place where the blessed one was resting, and he saw a certain bright ray shining upon him. And he was overcome by a great fear and thought to himself: "What does this mean?" And fountains of tears poured forth from his eyes. Then with joy, giving thanks to God, he went on his way.

On his way he prayed to the Lord that he might find a companion who knew the way well, and the Lord soon heard his prayer, and the blessed one, looking back, saw a man walking on the road. He was going to Valaam also on some business, and the blessed youth rejoiced at finding such a companion. With him he travelled in a few days a road which some travel with difficulty only in many days. And when they neared the monastery and the blessed youth saw the church of the Lord's Transfiguration, he stood at prayer with tears. Then, looking around for his companion, he could not find him; and he understood that his good companion, an Angel, had been sent him by God, and he gave thanks to the Lord God for this.

Coming to the monastery gate, he met some monks standing outside the gate and, bowing to them, he said, "Bless me, holy fathers." They informed the Abbot concerning him, and he ordered the blessed youth to be brought to him. Going to the Abbot, he bowed down to the ground before him and received his blessing. And he began to entreat him with tears to make him a monk. The Abbot, whose name was Joachim, seeing him so young, tested him by speaking of the monks' sorrowful life, full of deprivations. But the blessed youth continued his entreaty, and the Abbot, looking upon him with the eyes of the heart, saw that he was to be a chosen vessel of God, and he said: "Blessed is God, Who wishes all men to be saved. May He grant you, O child, strength and patience according to your desire, unto salvation. From henceforth you will serve the brethren in all patience and obedience." Hearing this from the Abbot, he bowed down to the ground before him. And thus the hairs of his head were tonsured, and with them he put off all vain wisdom that draws one downward, and his name was called Alexander; he was then 26 years old. And having given thanks to God that he had been enabled to flee the agitation of worldly life for the serene harbor of monasticism, he gave himself over entirely to Him, laboring day and night without sloth, wearing out his flesh with fasting and prayer. He spent his days in labors for the monastery, and his nights in vigils and glorification of God; he could not be drawn into unfitting conversations, but kept his mind ever upon God alone. And his life was not as that of a man, but of an Angel, so that the Abbot and the brethren were astonished at his great humility and his surpassing obedience toward everyone.

THE PARENTS of blessed Alexander grieved much over being separated from him, and they sought him everywhere. After three years the blessed one's father found out that he had been tonsured a monk at Valaam, and being inflamed with fatherly love, he set out on the long journey in order to see his

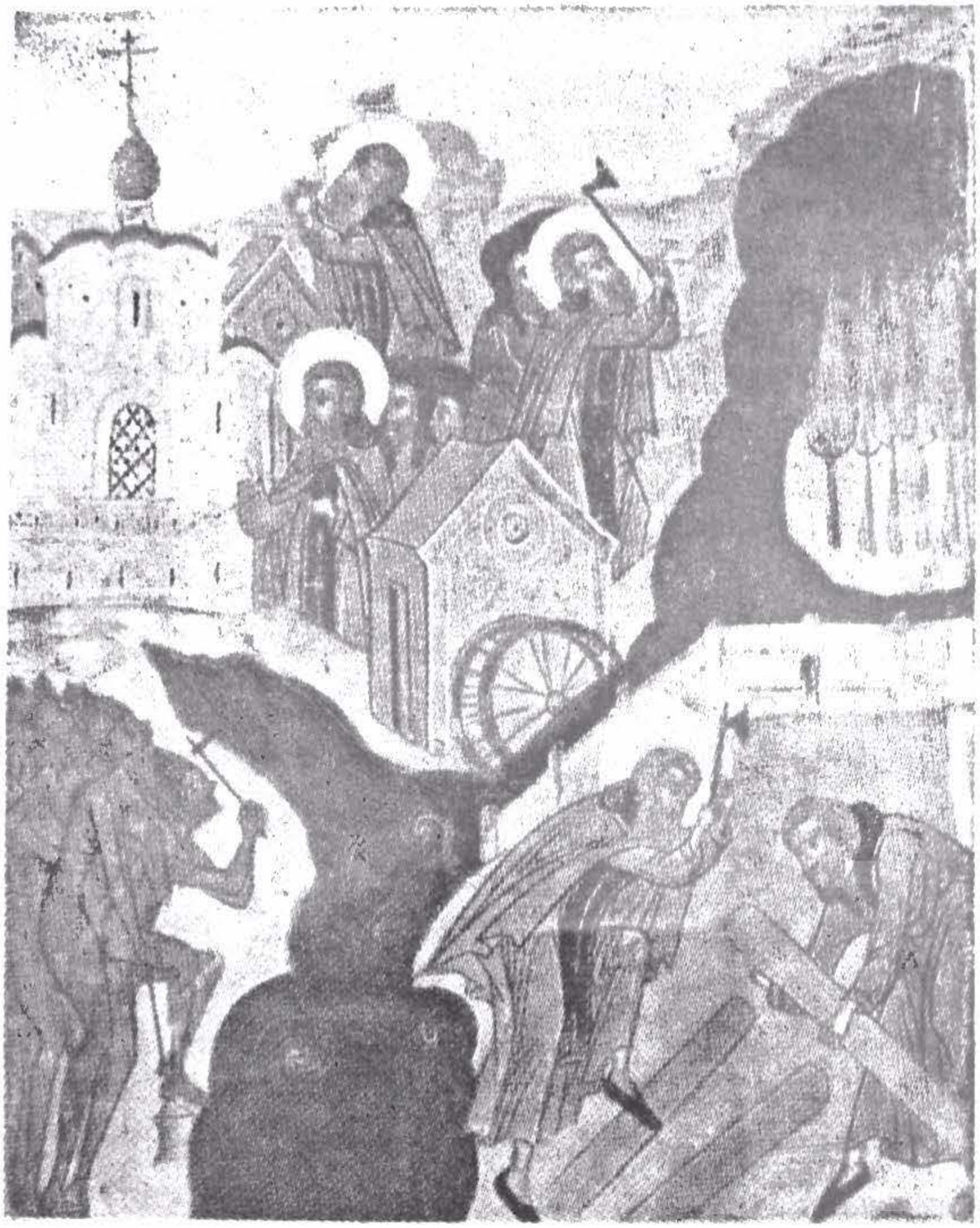
son. In vain did he try to persuade his son to return home in order to console his parents until their death; rather, the counsel and the fervent prayer of blessed Alexander persuaded his father to become a monk also, and on returning to his home he entered the above-mentioned monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God, was tonsured a monk and called Sergius, and died in peace. Likewise, the Saint's mother was clothed in monasticism and called Barbara, and after living a God-pleasing life, reposed in the Lord. St. Alexander, hearing that his parents had reposed, wept much over them; but then, placing his hope in God, he said to himself: "I also am mortal."

And from that time he entered into yet greater labors. Then he was sent by the Abbot to the bakery, and there he remained in humility, prospering in labors above everyone else, carrying water and bearing wood from the forest, wearing out his body, thus laboring ceaselessly every day, and at night praying to God without slothfulness; and sometimes, leaving his cell and exposing his body to the waist, he would stand until morning psalmody, and his body would be covered with a multitude of mosquitoes and gnats. In the morning he was to be found in church before everyone else, and standing in his place, without moving his feet, he would raise his entire mind to the heights of reflection on God, paying diligent heed to the Divine singing and reading; and he left church after everyone else. And all were astonished at his humility and patience, wherefore he was greatly loved by all and greatly revered and glorified.

Seeing himself thus revered and glorified by all, the Saint sorrowed greatly over this and thought of fleeing from human glory into the wilderness, there to labor for God alone, that he might be glorified by Him with eternal glory before the Angels and all the Saints. And so one day he went to the Abbot, according to custom, for blessing and prayer, and confessed to him the sorrow of his heart and his thought, and falling to his feet, he entreated him to bless him to go into the wilderness. The Abbot, however, forbade him, saying: "No, child, do not say this, for you are young, and it is not the time for you to touch the highest stage of solitary silence, before having made your feet firm on the foundation of the first stage of the common life and obedience." St. Alexander submitted to the will of the Abbot, and begging forgiveness of him, he remained in obedience, laboring with the brethren, and if he saw someone unable to work, he helped him. And thus he served the brethren ceaselessly every day, and at night he remained without sleep, standing and praying to God. And the Abbot and the brethren were astonished at his hard life and his manful patience.

Incidents from the Life of St. Alexander:
The Saint performing various obediences at Valaam Monastery.

After this, one night St. Alexander was praying to God and His Most Pure Mother, entreating Her to instruct him on a way in which he might be saved, when suddenly he heard a voice saying: "Alexander, depart from hence and go to the place which was shown you before, in which you can be saved." With the voice a great light also appeared. The Saint opened the window of his cell and saw a great light shining toward the east and south, and by a voice, as by a finger, was pointed out that place whereon now by God's grace his monastery stands. From this voice and vision the Saint was filled with great joy and gave thanks to God that He had not disdained his entreaty. Soon he went to the Abbot, confessed to him the apparitions which he had seen on the way when he was walking to Valaam and now in the monastery. And the Abbot, hearing this and understanding that he was to be a certain chosen vessel, said: "May the will of the Lord be done in you, child." And the Saint, having received a blessing from the Abbot from whom he had received the monastic



Incidents from the Life of St. Alexander:
The building of the mill (see next issue).

tonsure, was filled with great joy and tears, and going to his cell prayed for hours. And when night came, he arose and departed from the monastery, having nothing except the garment which he wore, and by God's favor he came in the year 1485 to the place which had been shown to him before. And he loved it very much, and having prayed he said: "Behold my repose unto the ages of ages; here I shall settle, for the Lord has desired it." And again: "Blessed be God from now unto the ages, Who has heard my entreaty." Having gone about that place, and seeing a beautiful spot and a certain bright ray of light illuminating it, where the monastery is now, he built a small hut there. And he began to live in that place alone, where no one before had lived, and paid heed ever to God alone. Ceaselessly, day and night, he showed forth his correction before God, remaining in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, in prayer and in vigil, and in extreme fastings, and in temptations and sorrows, as an unwavering pillar, being consoled with the hope of receiving future goods.

ONCE, WHEN he was going from his hut to fetch water and was singing the songs of David, as it was his custom ceaselessly to sing and pray, suddenly he heard a voice from heaven saying: "Alexander, as you have kept My commandments from your youth, you have fervently passed through a narrow and most sorrowful path; wherefore, I have prepared for you a countless multitude of people, as before I told you. Do not refuse them, but receive them with outstretched arms, and you shall be their instructor unto salvation." Hearing this, the Saint fell with his face to the ground, his mind, however, touching heaven, sending up songs of thanksgiving to God, entreating Him with tears that he might not receive glory from men, but remain in the wilderness and in silence. But the Lord did not desire that this great luminary should be hidden in the wilderness.

Not far from this wilderness, some nine miles, there lived a certain nobleman by the name of Andrew Zavalishin. Once he went out hunting with a company of his men and with dogs, and they came to a thicket of the forest, when suddenly a deer appeared before them. Andrew had his company chase the deer, but it ran very swiftly and the dogs could not catch up with it. In the pursuit Andrew became separated from the rest and chased it by himself. At last the deer became invisible in the thicket, and Andrew had turned to seek out his company, when he saw a small hut with human footprints around it, and he greatly rejoiced, thinking that some slave of God must be living here in silence. And going up to the hut he said a prayer and knocked on the door. St. Alexander came out and was frightened, thinking he saw a spirit; for he had never seen a man in that wilderness. The Saint, however, blessed him, and Andrew told him what had happened, adding: "And I believe that it was not a deer which I was pursuing, but a certain power of God that brought me to your holiness, that I might receive your holy blessing and prayer. For I should inform you that previously when I have gone out hunting in this wilderness, many times I have seen right on this spot, sometimes as it were a fiery pillar standing, and sometimes a certain Divine ray shining, and sometimes a bright smoke ascending from the earth to the heights. Many times I have attempted to come to this place to find out about this, but I could not, until God permitted it." And he asked the Saint about his life in the wilderness. Hearing this, St. Alexander was greatly grieved that he could not hide himself from men, and, making him promise with an oath not to tell anyone of him before his death, he told him of his life in this wilderness, where he had lived for seven years without seeing a man, living on plants alone, of how he had suf-

fered greatly in the beginning from the difficulty of such a life, and of how he had been healed of a pain in the stomach by an Angel who appeared and made the sign of the Cross over the afflicted spot. Andrew, hearing this from the Saint, glorified God; and bowing down to the ground before him, he received his blessing and went to his home rejoicing.

After a little time the rumor of St. Alexander went about through all the neighboring region. For the pious Andrew did not wish to be silent about the greatness of God, but strove to glorify the Saint everywhere. Hearing about St. Alexander, his own brother in the flesh, John, came to him, for he had sought him for a long time. St. Alexander received him with love and greatly rejoiced over his coming; for from the time when he received the monastic mantle he had not seen him, and what is more, John in his life and manner was similar to St. Alexander. And they agreed to remain together in keeping God's commandments, following the words: *Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them* (Matt. 18:20). And thus they greatly forced themselves, for the sake of the hope of the resurrection and the enjoyment of future goods, remembering the virtuous life and correction of many saints of old, striving to follow them, and ascending as by a ladder of good ascent to the heights. Then they began to build cells for those who wished to live with them; for many, emulating their angelic life, left this vain world and came to them. After a short time the Saint's brother John died, and his soul departed to the Lord Whom he had loved; and his body St. Alexander buried in the inner wilderness with psalms and spiritual songs.

Those who wished to live with him the Saint consoled with sweet teaching and strengthened for ascetic labor, his lips being informed by the Holy Spirit, saying: "Do not fear, O brethren, painful continence and the labor of fasting, nor this desert place and the narrow and sorrowful life! The present labors, bodily chastisement, and narrow life, and restraint of desires, and everything sorrowful which is for the sake of God, and tender feeling, and tears, and confessions of sins — prepare us to receive the enjoyment of those future goods." And all were filled with sweetness listening to his teaching, each striving with zeal according to his strength. And the number of the brethren increased, and each remained alone separately in silence, following their good pastor and teacher.

After a little time Andrew Zavalishin again came to St. Alexander together with his children, bringing a load of bread and rye and barley, asking the Saint's blessing and prayers. The Saint blessed him and spoke to him for

some time for his spiritual profit, before dismissing him in peace.* Then he called the brethren together and showed them everything and said: "See, O brethren, how God cares for us His slaves who live in this wilderness, and how He has not forgotten us poor ones to the end, and will never disdain this place and those who live here faithfully serving him." From that time the Saint began to hew wood, and till the earth, and sow, and he ate from his own labor, and fed the poor and travellers, and gave generously to those who asked. And God gave him yet more increase, inasmuch as He wished to glorify His Saint.

A certain monk by the name of Nicephorus, having heard of St. Alexander, came to him and bowed down, asking his blessing. The Saint, seeing him, rejoiced, for he had heard of him as being of great life. This monk wore a great weight of iron about his whole body, and his loins were girt with much chain. The Saint entreated him to remain with him; and he, seeing the great fervency of the Saint, and his meekness of soul, and warm love, remained with him for some years. And St. Alexander, seeing him shining in virtues, received great profit for himself from him, and he thought that his arrival was truly a visitation of God to him. Finally this monk left, despite the entreaties of the Saint, to go to the Kiev Caves Monastery; and to the Saint he said, prophesying: "On this spot God wills that a stone church be built by you, and that the monastery be extended, and that in it His holy name be glorified in the whole land." And thus he went on his way.

ST. ALEXANDER began then to exercise himself in labors beyond the power of man, in hunger and thirst and endurance of cold, hoping by the brief frost of winter to escape the eternal fire to come. But the demons, seeing themselves pressed by the Saint, and understanding that they were about to be banished by him, attempted beforehand to frighten him, appearing sometimes as beasts and sometimes as serpents who rushed upon him with whistling and beastly ferocity, and causing him many other vexations. One night St. Alexander was walking to his solitary hermitage, where it was his custom to pray by himself, when suddenly there appeared to him a countless multitude of demons, as it were a great army, leaping at him with great rage and gnashing their teeth, and a great flame seemed to come out of their mouths, and with great pride they cried at him: "Depart, depart from this place, flee quickly from here lest you die an evil death." But the Saint, like a good warrior of

* Andrew Zavalishin (St. Adrian of Ondrusov) later became a disciple of St. Alexander and then founded his own monastery. He is commemorated by the Church on August 26 and May 17.

Jesus Christ, being armed with prayer, was not at all frightened by them, knowing their infirm power; and the prayer of St. Alexander came out of his mouth as a fiery flame and scorched all the impotent legions of demons, and then they became invisible.

St. Alexander came in that hour to the solitary hermitage, and there he performed his usual prayers to the Lord God. And suddenly an Angel appeared to him in a most bright garment. Seeing him the Saint was filled with fear and terror and fell to the ground and lay there like a dead man. The Angel took him by the hand and appeared to him as a man, saying: "I am an Angel of the Lord, sent by God to preserve you from all the deceptions of the cunning devil and to remind you of the Divine visions which came to you before in this place where you have settled, that His command may be executed: for the Lord has chosen you to be a guide for many to salvation. I declare to you that it is God's will that you build a church in this place in the name of the Holy Trinity, and that you gather brethren and establish a monastery." And having said this, he became invisible. St. Alexander, however, loving silence desired to remain in it all the days of his life, and all the more did he pray to God to deliver him from every deceit of the enemy.

Once, when the Saint had gone away from his hut some distance and was praying, as was his custom, for some hours, suddenly the Angel of the Lord again appeared to him, saying: "Alexander, as I have said before: build a church, and gather brethren, and establish a monastery; for many will come to you desiring to be saved; instruct them on the path of salvation." Having said this, he again became invisible.

And then, in the year 1508, the 23rd year after the Saint's coming to the wilderness, one night St. Alexander was standing in his solitary hermitage, praying to God according to his custom, when suddenly a great light appeared in the cabin where he stood. The Saint was astonished and thought to himself: "What does this mean?" And suddenly he saw three men coming to him in most bright garments and clothed in white, beautiful in purity, shining more than the sun and illuminated with unutterable heavenly glory, and each holding a staff in his hand. The Saint, seeing them, was all trembling; for fear and terror seized him. And coming to himself a little, he understood, and strove to bow down to the ground before them. But they, taking him by the hand, raised him up, saying: "Have hope, O blessed one, and do not fear." And the Saint said to them: "My Lords, if I have acquired grace before you, inform me who you are who, being in such glory and brightness, have not disdained to come to your slave; for I have never seen anyone in such glory as I see you." Answering him, they said again: "Fear not, man of desires, for the

Holy Spirit has been pleased to dwell in you because of the purity of your heart, and just as I have said to you before repeatedly, so now I likewise say, that you shall build a church, and gather brethren, and establish a monastery; for I have been pleased to save many souls through you and bring them to the knowledge of the truth."

Hearing this, the Saint again bent his knees, and being drenched with tears, said: "My Lord, who am I, a sinner, the worst of all men, that I should be worthy of such a matter as that of which Thou hast spoken to me; for I am unworthy to accept such a mission. For I, unworthy one, did not come to this place for that concerning which Thou commandest me, but rather to weep over my sins." This the Saint said, and lay upon the ground. And again the Lord, taking him by the hand, raised him up, saying: "Stand upon your feet, be able, and be strengthened, and do all that I have commanded you." The Saint answered: "My Lord, be not angry at me, that I have dared to speak before Thee; inform me by what name this church shall be called which Thy love of mankind desires to build on this spot." And the Lord said to the Saint: "Beloved, as you see the One speaking to you in three persons, build the church in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity One in essence." Then He said again: "I leave you My peace, and My peace I grant unto you." And suddenly the Saint saw the Lord with spread wings going on the ground as if by feet, and then He became invisible."

And St. Alexander was overcome with much joy and with fear, and he gave great thanksgiving for this to God the Lover of mankind. He began to think about how and in what spot he should place the church. After thinking much of this and praying to God, one day he suddenly heard a voice speaking to him from above. Looking upward, the Saint saw an Angel of God in a mantle and hood standing on the air, having outstretched wings (in the same way in which once he appeared to the great Pachomius,* with his arms stretched upward and saying: "One is Holy, One is Lord, Jesus Christ, unto the glory of God the Father. Amen." And then he said to the Saint: "Alexander, let the church be built on this spot in the name of the Lord Who appeared to you in three persons, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, undivided Trinity." And having said this, he signed that place with his hand in the form of a cross, and then became invisible. St. Alexander greatly rejoiced over this and glorified God that He had not disdained his entreaty, and on this spot he erected a cross.

(*To be concluded in the next issue.*)

* St. Pachomius the Great (†348, com. May 15), to whom the Angel appeared and gave the first Rule of cœnobitic life.

MATERIALS ON THE LIFE AND MIRACLES OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN MAXIMOVITCH

"What a Man of Prayer We Had"

BY BISHOP SAVVA OF EDMONTON

(*Orthodox Russia*, 1967, no. 7)

WHILE VLADIKA JOHN was still alive, a woman in San Francisco told me much that was interesting about him. I asked her to write down some of what she had said. Here is some of what she sent:

"The Chinese Communists did not allow my husband, Gregory Popov, out of China when he was going to come to me three years ago [about 1958]. They gave him injections for tetanus instead of smallpox, and he died of blood poisoning in Tientsin. I wept bitterly and fell into despondency. At this time Vladika John was in San Francisco. After the All-night Vigil he came up to me and said: 'I have heard of your sorrow.' I burst into bitter tears. Vladika went, took a candle, prayed, and placed it on the table of remembrance, and then came up to me and firmly made the sign of the Cross over me. At that moment I felt as though an enormous weight had been removed from my head and my whole body, and it became so easy for me, and I completely stopped weeping and even forgot my sorrow.

"Another incident, in San Francisco: Mrs. Pribylovskaya was very upset and wept over her husband, who was to be operated on. The night before the operation she came to Vladika. He immediately went with her to the hospital and prayed for a long time over her husband. In the morning the doctor ordered the patient to be brought into the operating room. Here the surgeon examined the patient and said that he was well, the tumor had disappeared, and no operation was necessary. The doctors said it was God Who had healed him. Mrs. Pribylovskaya and her husband are both well and are working.

"Dr. Bill told me the following: In the Russian Hospital in Shanghai there was a critically ill woman and she begged everyone to call Vladika John so that he would give her Holy Communion and pray for her. The doctor told the nurses not to disturb Vladika, since the sick woman was dying. The next day, to the astonishment of all, Vladika came to the hospital and went right to the ward where the sick woman was. 'Why are you preventing me from praying?' he said to her. 'Right now I have to serve the Liturgy.' He gave her the Holy Mysteries, blessed her, and left. She fell asleep and after this began quickly to recover." *G. Baranova-Popova.*

What can one say to all this? The impression is striking, and therefore with great sadness I say: Oh, what a great righteous one and man of prayer we had, and did not know how to value him!

The SCROLL

CONTAINING
SIX CHAPTERS ON MENTAL PRAYER
By Our Father of Blessed Memory,
ELDER PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

CHAPTER TWO

THE BEGINNING OF THIS DIVINE MENTAL PRAYER, AND WHAT TESTIMONIES THE GOD-BEARING FATHERS BRING FORTH CONCERNING IT FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

(*Continued*)

The fiery pillar and fiery lips of the Holy Spirit, the eye of the Church, Basil, I say, the Great, in explaining the passage of the Divine Scripture: *I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always on my lips* (Ps. 33:1), excellently teaches concerning the mental lips and mental activities, that is, concerning mental prayer, bringing forth testimony from the Sacred Scripture; and his very words, filled with Divine wisdom, I here present:

"*His praise shall be always on my lips.* It appears that the Prophet says the impossible: how can the praise of God be on human lips always? When a man speaks in ordinary worldly conversations, he does not have on his lips the praise of God; when he sleeps, he is entirely silent; and also when he eats and drinks, how can his lips pronounce praise? To this we reply that there are certain mental lips of the inner man by which he is nourished, partaking of the Word of life, which is *the bread which cometh down from heaven* (John 6:33). It is precisely these lips of which the Prophet spoke: *I opened my lips and summoned the Spirit* (Ps. 118:131). It is to this that the Lord arouses us, that we should have these lips opened wide so as sufficiently to receive true food, when He says: *Open wide thy lips and I will fill them* (Ps. 80:11). Wherefore, the thought of God, once engraved on and confirmed in the understanding of the soul, can be called the praise of God which is always

in the soul. And according to the word of the Apostle, one who is heedful can do everything to the glory of God, so that every deed, and every word, and every mental activity has the significance of praise. *Whether* the righteous man *eat, or drink, or whatsoever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God* (I Cor. 10:31). In such a one, even when he is asleep, his heart keeps vigil." Thus does St. Basil speak. And from his words it is clear that besides the lips of the body there are also lips of the mind, and there is a mental work and praise which are ever mentally within the inner man.

The namesake of blessedness, the Egyptian — or rather, universal — sun, who has shone forth with unutterable gifts of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly man, the Great, I say, Macarius, in his heavenly words concerning this holy prayer speaks thus: "A Christian must always have the remembrance of God, because it is written: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart* (Matt. 22:37). He must love the Lord not only when he enters the temple of prayer, but also when walking, and conversing, and eating, and drinking, let him have the remembrance of God, and love, and desire; for He says: *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also* (Matt. 6:21), and the rest.

The holy and God-bearing Father of old, Isaiah the Hermit, concerning the hidden teaching, that is, the Prayer of Jesus, which is performed by the thought in the heart, brings forth as testimony the words of the Divine Scripture: *My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out* (Ps. 38:4).

St. Simeon, who is testified of in the above-mentioned book of the most blessed Simeon of Thessalonica, who in the midst of the reigning city [Constantinople] shone forth like the sun by mental prayer in unutterable gifts of the Most Holy Spirit, and consequently is called by the entire Church the New Theologian — in his homily on the three forms of prayer writes thus concerning mental prayer and heedfulness: "Our Holy Fathers, hearing the Lord Who said that *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, and these are the things which defile a man* (Matt. 15:19-20); and again hearing that He teaches to *cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also* (Matt. 23:26), abandoned every other work and labored only in this guarding of the heart, knowing for certain that together with this doing they would keep without difficulty every other virtue as well. And without this doing it is impossible for there to be a single virtue." These words of the Saint

clearly indicate that the divine Fathers placed the above-mentioned words of the Lord as a testimony and foundation for themselves of the guarding of the heart, that is, of the mental invocation of Jesus. This Saint brings forth also, as a testimony of Divine mental prayer, other passages of Sacred Scripture, saying: "Ecclesiastes speaks of this: *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and go undefiled in the ways of thy heart, and remove anger from thy heart* (Eccl. 11: 9-10), and: *If the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, leave not thy place* (Eccl. 10:4). By "place" he means the heart, as also the Lord has said: *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts* (Matt. 15:19). And again: *Be ye not haughty* (Luke 12:29), [that is, do not dissipate your mind hither and thither]. And again: *Narrow is the gate, and sorrowful is the way, which leadeth unto life* (Matt. 7:14); likewise: *Blessed are the pure in heart* (Matt. 5:8), that is, those who do not have in themselves a single thought of this world." And the Apostle Peter says: *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour* (I Pet. 5:8). And the Apostle Paul clearly writes to the Ephesians concerning the guarding of the heart, saying: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* (Eph. 6:12).

St. Hesychius the Presbyter, Theologian and teacher of the Church of Jerusalem, friend and intimate of our holy and God-bearing Father Euthemius the Great, who wrote in Divinely-wise fashion, from the enlightenment of Divine grace, a book in 200 chapters concerning this sacred mental invocation of Jesus in the heart, that is, concerning mental prayer, brings forth concerning this the following testimonies from Sacred Scripture: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God* (Matt. 5:8); likewise: *Beware, lest there be a hidden word of iniquity in thy heart* (Deut. 15:9); likewise: *In the morning will I stand before Thee, and Thou shalt see me* (Ps. 5:4); likewise: *Blessed is he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock* (Ps. 136:9); likewise: *In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land, that I might cut off all the doers of iniquity from the city of the Lord* (Ps. 100:8); likewise: *Be prepared, O Israel, to call upon the name of the Lord thy God* (Amos 4:12); and the Apostle: *Pray without ceasing* (I Thes. 5:17); and the Lord Himself says: *Without Me ye can do nothing. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch* (John 15:5-6); likewise: *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts: murders, adulteries... These are the things which defile a man* (Matt.

15:19); likewise: *I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart* (Ps. 39:9); and others, which because of their multitude I omit.

Our divine and God-bearing Father John of the Ladder brings forth the testimony of Divine Scripture concerning this sacred prayer and true silence of the mind, saying: "The great doer of great and perfect prayer has said: *I had rather speak five words with my understanding* (I Cor. 14:19), and the rest; and again: *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready* (Ps. 56:8) likewise: *I sleep, but my heart keepeth vigil* (Song of Songs 5:2); likewise: *I cried with my whole heart* (Ps. 118:145), that is, with body and soul; and the rest."

Our divine Father Philotheus, Abbot of the Monastery of the Bush of the Most Holy Mother of God which is on Sinai, who compiled a small book of chapters on the mental guarding of the heart —priceless pearls of Divine wisdom, filled with unutterable heavenly sweetness of the Holy Spirit — places as the unshakable foundation of his words the words of the Sacred Scripture: *In the morning I put to death all the wicked of the land* (Ps. 100:8), and the rest; likewise: *The Kingdom of God is within you* (Luke 17:21); and: "He likened the Kingdom of Heaven to a mustard seed, and a pearl, and leaven"; and again: *Without Me ye can do nothing* (John 15:5); likewise: *With all watchfulness keep thy heart* (Prov. 4:23); and: *Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also* (Matt. 23:26); and: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* (Eph. 6:12); likewise: *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith* (I Pet. 5:8-9); likewise: *I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity* (Rom. 7:22-23); and others.

Our divine Father Diadoch, Bishop of Photicus, of whom testimony is given in the book of the above-mentioned Hierarch of Christ, Simeon of Thessalonica, places the following foundation from the Divine Scripture in his homily (one out of 100 chapters in his divine book) on the mental Jesus Prayer sacredly performed in the heart: *No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. 12:3); and from the Gospel parable of the merchant who was seeking good pearls he brings forth the following words: This is the

pearl of great price which can be obtained by him who will sell his property and will have unutterable joy over obtaining it, and the rest.

Our holy Father Nicephorus the Faster, of whom testimony is given in the same book of the above-mentioned Hierarch Simeon, in his homily on the guarding of the heart, which is filled with spiritual profit, likens this Divine mental doing of prayer in the heart to the treasure hid in the field, and calls it a burning lamp, bringing forth the passages of Sacred Scripture: *The Kingdom of God is within you* (Luke 17:21), and: *We wrestle not against flesh and blood* (Eph. 6:12); likewise: *to dress it and keep it* (Gen. 2:15), and the rest.

Our blessed and God-bearing Father Gregory the Sinaite, who by the doing of the Divine prayer ascended to the height of Divine vision and shone forth like the sun with gifts of the Holy Spirit on the Holy Mountain of Athos and in other places, who composed the Hymns to the Holy Trinity which are sung every Sunday after the Canon to the Holy Trinity [at Nocturns] in the Holy Catholic Eastern Church throughout the world, and likewise the Canon to the Life-giving Cross, having embraced the writings of all the God-bearing Fathers, composed a book, filled with every spiritual profit, in which he teaches in refined detail, more than all the other Saints, concerning this Divine prayer sacredly performed by the mind in the heart, and brings forth in confirmation of his words the following passages from the Sacred Scripture: *Remember the Lord thy God always* (Deut. 8:18); likewise: *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening let not thy hand cease* (Eccl. 11:6), and the rest; likewise: *If I pray with the tongue,* that is, with the lips, *my spirit prayeth,* that is, my voice (know, that lips and tongue, and spirit, and voice — are one and the same thing), *but my understanding is unfruitful. I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also*; and: *I had rather speak five words with my understanding* (I Cor. 14:14, 15, 19), and the rest, bringing forth as a witness also St. John of the Ladder, who refers these words to prayer. Likewise: *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force* (Matt. 11:12); likewise: *No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. 12:3), and the rest.

The follower of the steps of the Apostles, the invincible pillar of the Orthodox Faith, he who by the fiery sword of the Spirit and the truth of Orthodox dogmas annihilated the Spirit-fighting heresies of the Latins, as if they had been the webs of spiders, at the Council of Florence -- Mark, I say, the

all-sacred, most wise and most eloquent Metropolitan of Ephesus, in the beginning of his commentary on the Church's services, writes concerning the Divine Prayer of Jesus performed secretly by the mind in the heart, making use of the testimony of the Divine Scripture; his very words, Divinely wise, I present here: "We should, according to the commandment which has been commanded, *pray without ceasing,* and offer worship to God *in spirit and in truth;* but care for worldly thoughts and the fetters of concern for the body lead many away and turn many away from the *Kingdom of God* which is *within us,* as the word of God proclaims, and hinder us from remaining at the mental altar-table and offering of ourselves spiritual and rational sacrifices to God, according to the divine Apostle who says that we are the temple of God Who dwells in us, and His Divine Spirit dwells in us. And it is not astonishing if such a thing usually occurs with many who live according to the flesh, when we see that certain of the monks, who have renounced earthly things, by reason of the mental warfare at the undertaking of the passions and the great disturbance which arises therefrom and darkens the rational part of the soul, cannot yet attain to pure prayer, even though they strongly desire this. Sweet is the pure and unceasing remembrance of Jesus in the heart and the unutterable enlightenment which comes from it."

Our holy Russian Father, St. Nilus of Sora, who composed his book concerning the mental guarding of the heart from the teaching of the God-bearing Fathers, and in particular from Gregory the Sinaite, makes use of such testimonies as these from the Sacred Scripture: *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and these are the things which defile a man* (Matt. 15:19-20); and: *Cleanse that which is within the cup and platter* (Matt. 23:26); likewise: It is fitting *to worship the Father in spirit and in truth* (John 4:23); likewise: *If I pray with the tongue, and the rest;* and: *I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words with the tongue* (I Cor. 14:14, 19), and the rest.

Again, the Russian luminary, the Hierarch of Christ Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov, who with the spiritual sword of the word annihilated, as if they had been the webs of spiders, the errors of the sectarians and their God-resisting, corrupt understanding, which is contrary to the Sacred Scripture, who wrote for the benefit of the Holy Church many teachings which are filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and composed a homily on the inner mental doing of prayer which is overflowing with spiritual profit, makes use of the

following testimonies from Sacred Scripture: *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,* and the rest; likewise: *My heart said unto Thee: I will seek the Lord; My face hath sought Thee; Thy face, O Lord, will I seek; in the same way as the deer thirsteth for springs of water, so doth my soul thirst for Thee, O God;* likewise: *The Kingdom of God is within you;* likewise: *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit* (Eph. 6:18); and: *If I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful;* and again: *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also,* and the rest. These words, agreeing with Sts. John of the Ladder, and Gregory the Sinaite, and Nilus of Sora, he understands as referring to mental prayer.

Indeed, the Church's Typicon itself, which was printed in the great reigning city of Moscow, presenting the Church's law concerning prostrations and prayer, brings forth as testimony of this Divine prayer these passages from Divine Scripture: *God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth* (John 4:24). Likewise: *If I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also* (I Cor. 14: 14-15). And again: *In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than ten thousand words with the tongue* (I Cor. 14:19). And it brings forth as testimony from the Holy Fathers: St. John of the Ladder, and the divine Gregory the Sinaite, and St. Antioch, and in part their divine teaching on this mental prayer, and in the end it says: "And with this, here we end the discussion of the sacred and ever-memorable mental prayer." And then it speaks also of the holy prayer common to everyone, performed in the Church's services.

And so by God's grace it has been shown that the God-bearing Fathers, made wise by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, place the foundation of their teaching concerning the mental sacred activity of prayer, secretly performed within the inner man, on the unshakable rock of the Divine Scripture of the New and Old Testaments, taking from there, as from an inexhaustible source, such a multitude of testimonies.

And who among right-believing Christians, seeing this, could have the least doubt concerning this Divine matter? Only one who submits to the spirit of insensibility, who hears and sees but does not wish to understand and know, could do this. But those who fear God and have sound reason, seeing such testimonies of so many witnesses, will unanimously confess this to be a Divine

SAINT SIMON'S
MONASTERY OF
SIMONOPETRA

BLESSED PAISIUS

matter, more natural to and befitting the Angelic monastic order than all other monastic labors. Concerning this work the above-mentioned and very many other of our divine Fathers offer in their writings many worthy words, which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb and filled with spiritual wisdom, giving instruction concerning the inner, mental labor against the mental and invisible enemies: concerning how one should turn against them this spiritual sword and this flaming invincible weapon of the Name of Jesus which guards the doors of the heart; that is, concerning how this Divine Prayer of Jesus should be sacredly performed with the mind in the heart.

Concerning the sacred doing of this sacred prayer, especially concerning its very beginnings and concerning how beginners should learn it in practice, I, the least one, as far as the power of my infirm mind allows, must write at least a little, God strengthening me, from the teaching of the Holy Fathers. And first of all it must be explained that this Divine prayer is a spiritual art, and then what preparation there must be for practicing it, according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers.

The Life and Ascetic Labor of Our Father, Elder Paisius, Archimandrite of the Holy Moldavian Monasteries of Niamets and Sekoul. Part Three.

MOUNT ATHOS: IN QUEST OF THE PATRISTIC SOURCES

Blessed Paisius' search for the writings of the Holy Fathers

IN A LETTER many years later to Archimandrite Theodosius, Superior of the Sophroniev Hermitage in Russia, Elder Paisius set forth in detail the reasons which prompted him, while on Mount Athos, to begin his enormous labors in the collection, correction, and translation of the texts of the Holy Fathers:

"While I was still on the Holy Mountain of Athos with a small number of brethren, knowing, as is clear from the teaching and commandments of our God-bearing Fathers, that one who has brethren under his guidance must not instruct and teach them according to his own understanding and discernment, but rather according to the true and right understanding of Divine Scripture, as is taught by the divine Fathers, teachers of the inhabited world, and likewise by the teachers and instructors of monastic life, being enlightened by the grace of the All-Holy Spirit; and knowing further the poverty of my own mind, and fearing and trembling lest I myself fall, and push those who follow me, into a pit of perdition like a blind man, according to the word of the Lord, because of my inexperience — therefore, I placed as an unshakable foundation in true and undeceived instruction, undeviating from the true path of God, both for my own poor soul and for my holy brethren, the Divine Scripture of the Old and New Testaments and its true interpretation by the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, that is, the teaching of our God-bearing Fathers, the teachers of the inhabited world and the instructors of monastic life, the holy Councils and all the Canons of the Apostles and Councils and Holy Fathers which the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Eastern Church contains, and all Her commandments and rites. I offered all of this, as I have said, as instruction for myself and the holy brethren, so that both I and the brethren living with

me, being instructed by these, God cooperating and enlightening us by His grace, might not sin against the right and catholic thinking of the Holy Orthodox Church.

"And first of all, I began diligently to acquire, by God's help and with not a little labor and expense, the patristic books which teach of obedience and sobriety, of heedfulness and prayer. Some of them I copied out with my own hand, and others I bought with the coins which we had acquired from the labor of our hands for our indispensable needs, agreeing to suffer want many times in food and clothing [for the sake of the books]. Thus we bought with these coins the above-mentioned books written in the Slavonic language and regarded them as a heavenly treasure given to us freely by God. But when I had read them for a number of years with diligence, I found in very many places in them an impenetrable obscurity, and in many places I did not find even any grammatical sense, even though I read them many times with extreme labor and testing. God alone knows with what sorrow my soul was filled; and being uncertain what to do, I thought that it might be possible to correct the Slavonic books of the Fathers at least a little by comparing them with other Slavonic books.

"And I began to copy out with my own hand the book of St. Hesychius, Presbyter of Jerusalem, and St. Philotheus the Sinaite, and St. Theodore of Edessa, from four copies, so that at least by bringing together something from each of the four copies I might be able to see in them the grammatical sense. But all this labor of mine was in vain; for not even in those books compiled from four copies was I able to see the complete sense of them. Then for six weeks day and night I corrected my book of St. Isaac the Syrian from another copy of it, believing the assertion of one person that the copy corresponded in all respects to the Greek text; but this labor of mine also was in vain, for in time I came to understand that I had ruined my better copy from a worse one.

"And after I had suffered many times in this way, I recognized that I was laboring in vain in a supposed correction of Slavonic books by means of Slavonic ones; and I began diligently to search out the reason for such obscurity and want of grammatical sense in the books. With my infirm mind I made the discovery that there are two reasons for this: first, the inexperience of the ancient translators from Greek into Slavonic; second, the inexperience and carelessness of inexperienced copyists. And then I despaired completely of ever seeing in the Slavonic patristic books a right and true meaning such as is found in the same books in Greek. And after being on the Holy Mountain for many years, having learned somewhat how to speak in the simple Greek

language, I had all the more earnest intent to seek out, with pain of heart, the Greek patristic books, in hope of correcting the Slavonic books from them; and having searched many times in many places, I could not find them. Then I went to the Great skete of the Lavra, St. Anne's, and to Kapsokalyvia, and to the skete of Vatopedi, St. Demetrius', and to other lavras and monasteries, everywhere asking learned people, and the eldest and most experienced confessors and venerable monks, for the patristic books by name; nowhere, however, was I able to obtain such books, but from everyone I received the same set answer, that 'not only have we not known such books up to now, but we have never even heard of the names of such Saints.' Having received such a reply, God knows into what perplexity I fell, discerning that in such a holy place, chosen by God for the quiet and silent habitation of monks, where many great and perfect Saints had lived, I was unable not only to obtain these holy books which I so desired, but even to hear the names of those Saints from any one; and therefore I fell into not a little sorrow over this. However, I placed all my hope for the obtaining of such books on God, and I entreated His unutterable mercy that, in ways known to Him Who is all powerful and almighty, He might enable me to obtain such books. And God most merciful, not disdaining my fervent desire to obtain such patristic books in the Greek language, enabled me by His unutterable Providence to find such books and to acquire a certain part of them in the following manner:

"While I was walking alone with two brothers from the holy and great Lavra of St. Athanasius toward the great skete of the Lavra, St. Anne's, we came straight to the very high hill of the Holy Prophet Elias,* which is in height one-third of the great peak of holy Athos. Under this hill, on a very high place on the side toward the sea, there is the Skete of St. Basil the Great, which was established in recent times by monks who came from Cæsarea of Cappodocia. It is in a most steep place, having no fresh water either from a stream or from springs, and therefore this Skete has neither grapevines, nor olive trees, nor figs, nor gardens, nor any other kind of consolation that this world affords, but it fulfills the indispensable need of the brethren with rain-water alone. And the desire came to us to go to this Skete, whether to venerate the holy objects, or in order to see that place, in which we had never been up to then.

"And so we came to this Skete and sat down near the holy church, and a monk of reverent appearance saw us, and after we had venerated the holy

* This hill is not near the Skete of the Prophet Elias, but in the area of Karoulia, in the southern part of the Holy Mountain.

icons in the church and gone out, he invited us with love into his cell and went out to prepare some food for us in order to refresh us from the labor of walking. Looking at a little table which was near the window, I saw an opened book lying on it, from which he was making a copy, for by craft he was a calligrapher, and looking closely at his book I saw that it was the book of St. Peter Damascene, and seeing it I cannot express with what unutterable spiritual joy I was filled; for I thought that I had been enabled to see a heavenly treasure upon earth.

"When the brother returned to the cell, I began to ask him with great joy and unutterable astonishment, how it was that such a book, beyond all my hopes, was to be found in this holy place. He told me that there was even another book of this same Saint, having 24 Homilies in alphabetical order And when I asked him, 'And do you have other such books?' he replied that he had these: St. Anthony the Great, St. Gregory the Sinaite (but not all), St. Philotheus, St. Hesychius, St. Diodoch, St. Thalassius, St. Simeon the New Theologian's Homily on Prayer, St. Nicephorus the Monk's Homily on Prayer, the book of St. Isaiah, and other such books, but only 22 chapters of St. Nicetas Stethatis — 'but we do not have the whole book,' he said, 'for it is only in the libraries of the great monasteries.' And when I asked him how it was that I had sought such books for such a long time with pain of heart, and had not found them, and in inquiring diligently of many honorable persons I had not even been able to hear of them, he replied to me: 'The reason for this, in my opinion, is that these books are written in the purest Greek language, which few among the Greeks understand much of now, except for learned people, and many do not understand it at all; therefore such books have now fallen into all but complete oblivion, and that is why you were not able, when asking about such books, even to hear anything about them.' However, the monks who were living in this Skete had heard much about such books when they were still living in their country of Cæsarea of Cappadocia, and after coming to the Holy Mountain they had obtained them with much labor and time and not a little expense by the work of their hands, and had paid teachers so as to learn not only the simple Greek language, but also ancient Greek. Then, finding such books in some monasteries, with God's help, they were copying them, reading them, using them, and, in accordance with their strength, forcing themselves to do according to their teaching.

"Having heard this and rejoiced greatly with unutterable joy at obtaining such a heavenly treasure upon earth, I began to entreat him fervently, for the love of God, to copy such books for me also, promising to give for the

labor whatever price he might want. But he, having much to copy, refused, and led me to another calligrapher who was living in the same Skete; and him I likewise entreated with great fervor to copy the patristic books for me, promising to give him triple the price for the labor; and he, for the love of God, seeing my great desire to acquire such books, did not want triple the price, but for the ordinary price promised me, even though he himself had much to copy, to copy for me a part of such books, as much as he could and as God helped him. And thus, for the two years and a little more before our departure from the Holy Mountain, this calligrapher, setting to work, copied for me a certain part of the much-desired books, as much as God gave him help; and we, having received them with all joy as a gift of God sent to us from Heaven, departed from the Holy Mountain of Athos."*

41. The fame of Paisius.

NOW THE GOOD REPORT of Paisius went about the entire Holy Mountain, and all held him in honor and love; for they were astonished at the multiple gift of God in him, and they glorified God. And he was confessor for many great fathers there, even for the Most Holy Patriarch Seraphim himself, who was mentioned above; for the latter often visited him, sometimes, out of weakness, on a donkey, and sometimes on foot coming to the Skete, which was about a half-hour's walk from the Monastery; and they conversed with sweetness on things of the spirit and soul, and on faith, and on spiritual understanding, on manful ascetic labor, and on the gifts of an instructor, according to the understanding and teaching of our God-bearing Fathers; and they took comfort together in soul, burning in spirit to emulate the faith of those Fathers.

Sometimes the monks from the monasteries, sketes, and cells of Mount Athos would come to the Elder for confession and spiritual conversation in such multitudes that his own brethren had no opportunity to speak with their Elder, and there was murmuring among them over this. Even after his departure from the Holy Mountain, Blessed Paisius' influence remained there, for his tradition and rule were preserved in the Skete of the Prophet Elias and in other monasteries and inspired the great Russian Elders of Mt. Athos in the 19th century: Arsenius, Nicholas, Andrew, Nicodemus, Jerome, and others.**

* The whole quote from Paisius (in Slavonic) is in the Optina edition of his Life, pp. 197-201; there is a Russian translation-paraphrase in Chetverikov, I, pp. 84-88.

** This paragraph is from Chetverikov, II, pp. 6-7.

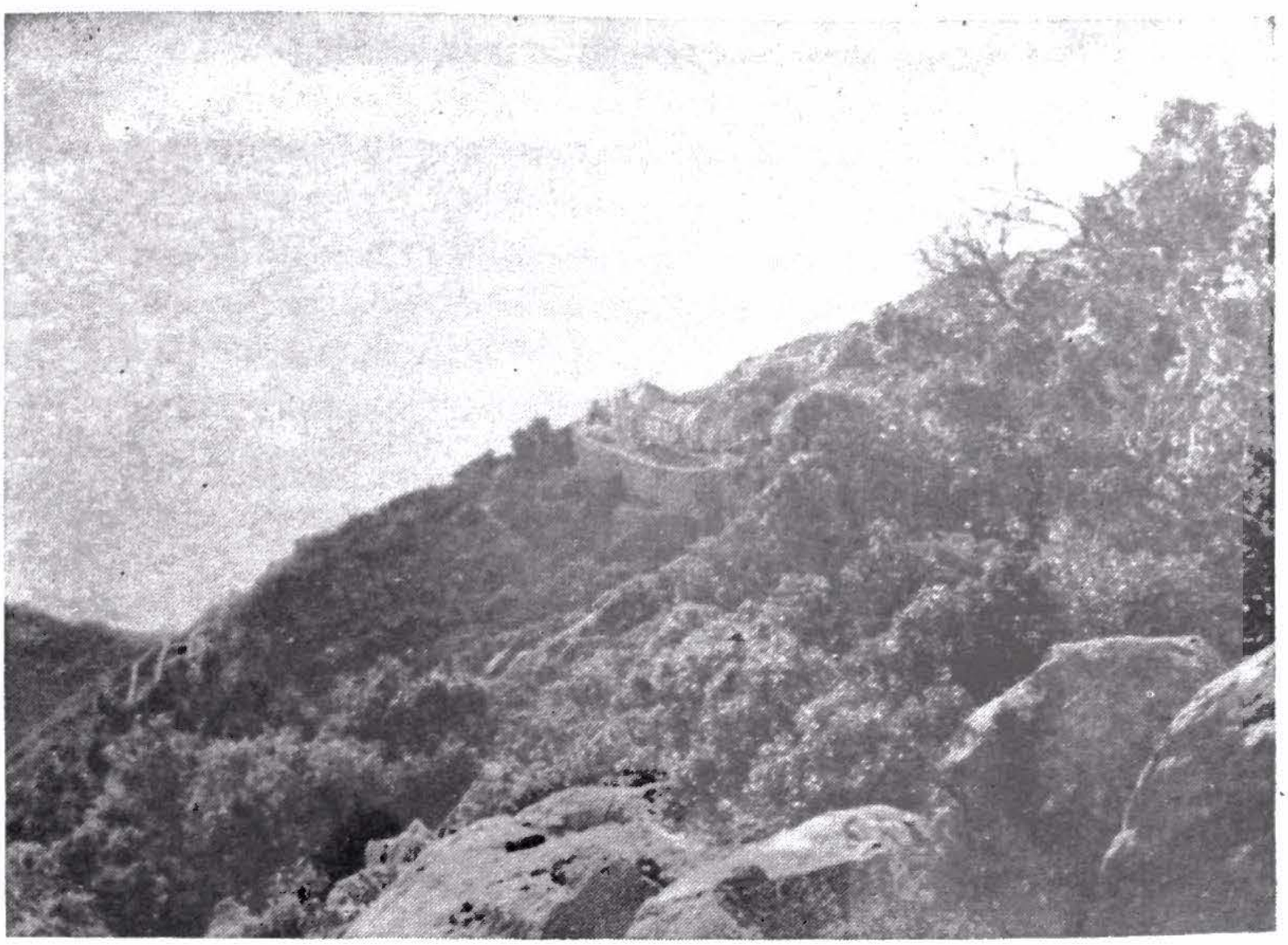
More than once in the year it would happen that the Most Holy Patriarch and the ruling fathers of the Monastery of Pantocratoros, out of their love for the Elder, would ask him on a Sunday or on some lesser feast to come to the Monastery and celebrate himself the Divine Liturgy with the Monastery's deacon in the great church. And there he served in the Greek language, not hurriedly, but reverently, with fear of God, unceasingly wetting his cheeks with tears; for never, during the course of his entire life, could he celebrate the Holy Liturgy without tears. The Most Holy Patriarch, standing with tears, would say: "Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee." And those who were standing in the Altar, seeing him thus entirely stretched out toward God, and as if transformed, and weeping, could scarcely utter the responses, so much were they moved and wept, so that some could not even remain in the Altar because of their tears but went out, and marvelling at the grace of God, they glorified God.

42. An envier.

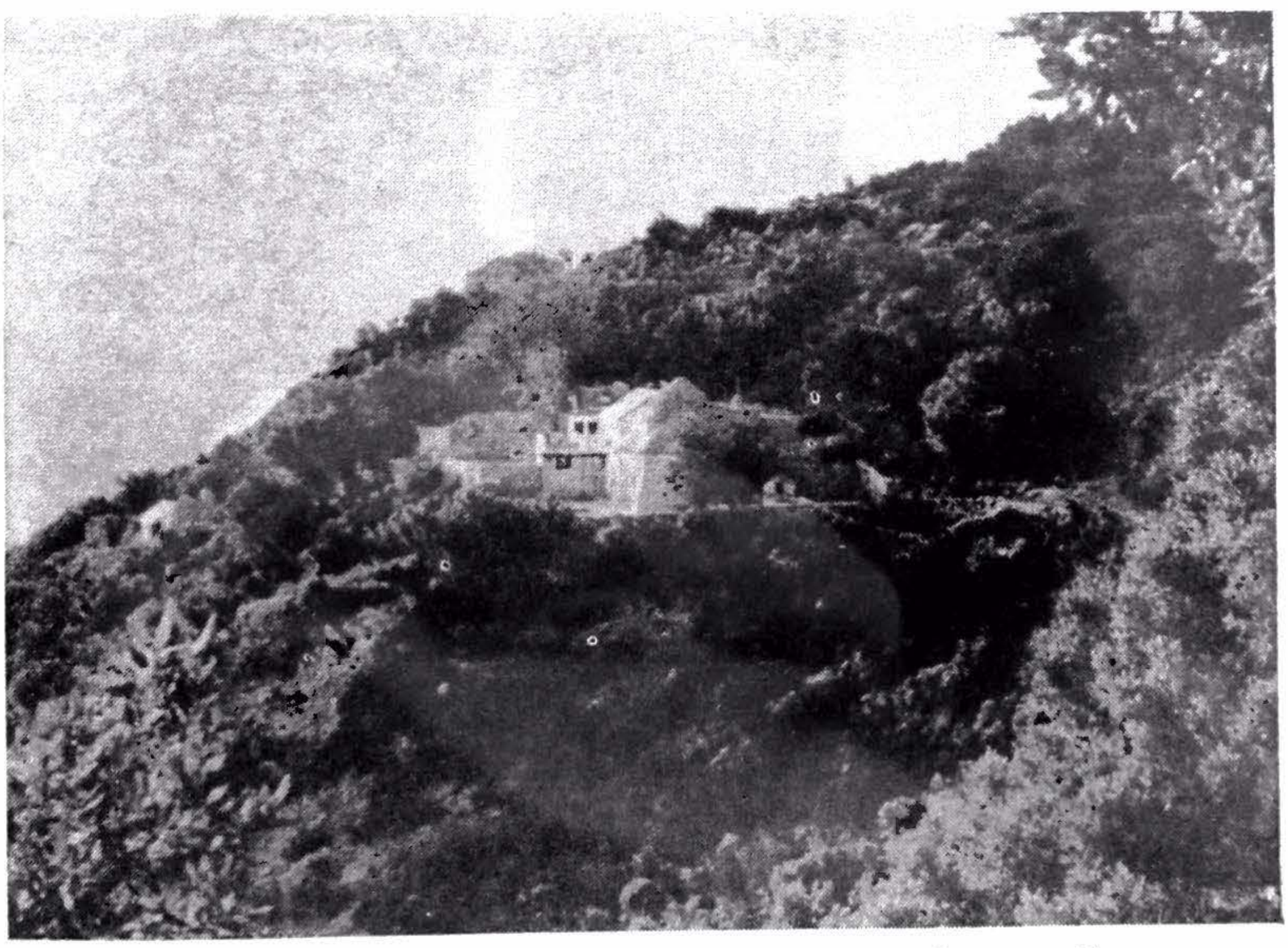
THERE WAS on the Holy Mountain a certain elder, in years older than our Father, who lived in the Skete of Kapsokalyvia with his disciples, whose name was Athanasius the Moldavian. He was moved by the counsel of the evil one to envy: envying the fame of Paisius, he began to sow evil rumor in the ears of many, calling our Father not merely a flatterer and deceiver, but also a heretic; and further, he blasphemed the sacred mental prayer which our Father taught to the brethren.

The accusations of Athanasius, in brief, were as follows:* That Paisius infringes and shortens the rule of prayer established by the Church for monks, incorrectly interprets the writings of St. Gregory the Sinaite, has an incorrect relationship to his spiritual father, is like the Pope of Rome in that he acknow-

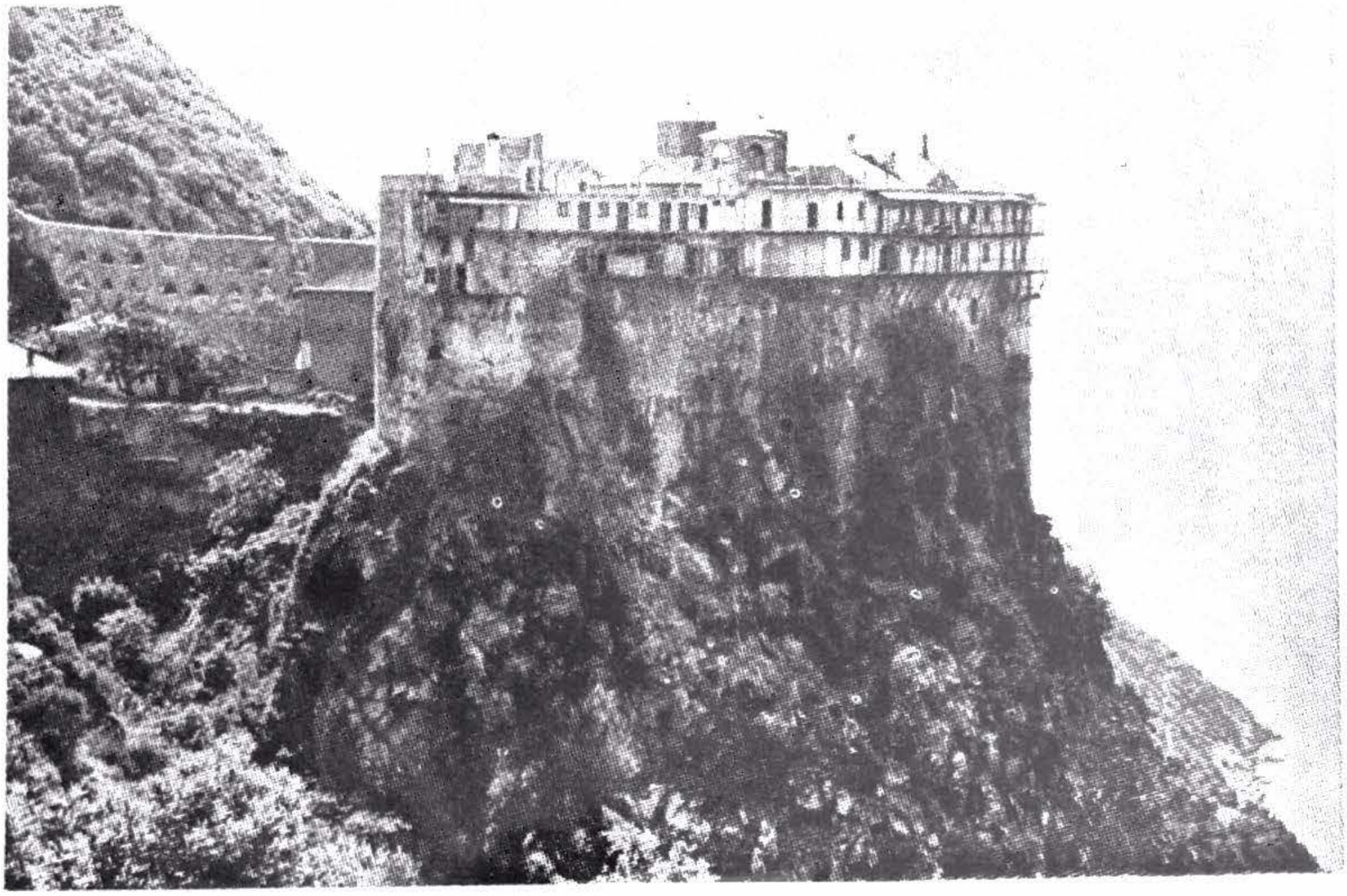
* This paragraph is from Chetverikov, I, p. 73. From this list of accusations it is evident that Athanasius was a practicer of outward asceticism, but was not familiar with the hesychast tradition with its spiritual guidance by an elder (who need not be a priest), daily confession of thoughts to him, and replacement of much of the daily cycle of church services by a set number of Jesus Prayers and prostrations. This tradition existed in Vlachia in the Sketes where Paisius had lived and still exists today in parts of Mt. Athos and elsewhere, both among Greeks and Russians. However, from all that is known of Blessed Paisius and the tradition that followed him, it is clear that, besides the rule of Jesus Prayer that he gave, he also preserved the daily cycle of services almost if not entirely complete.



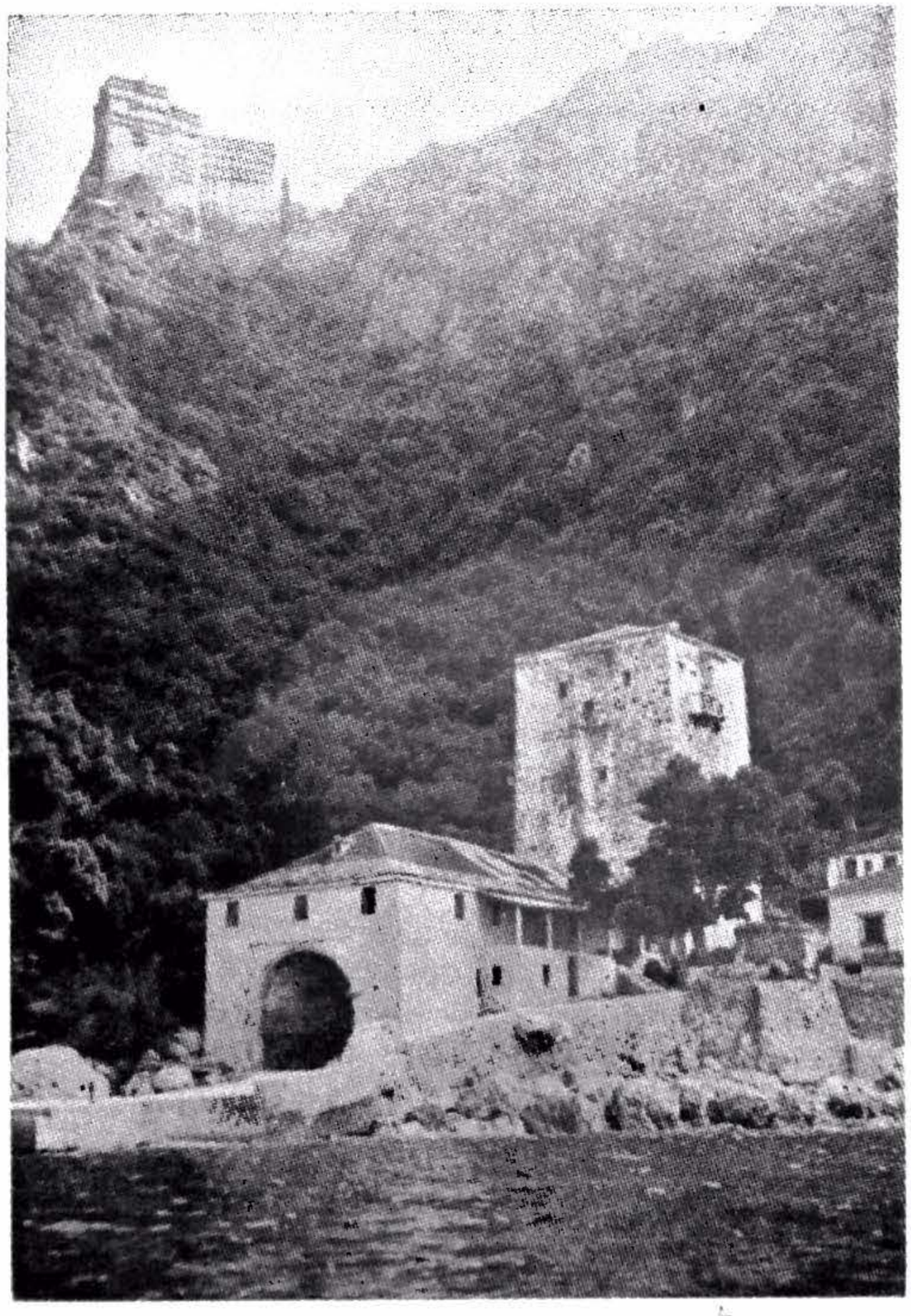
One of the Cells of the Skete of St. Basil, 2000 feet above the sea.

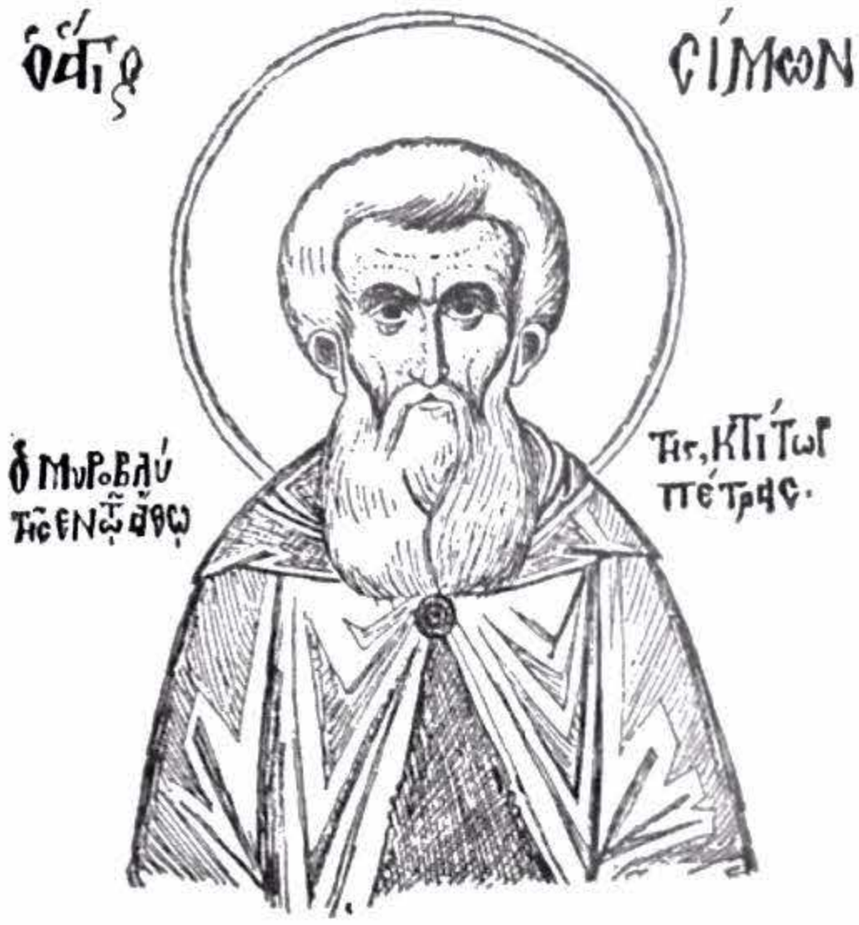


The Kyriakon (main church) of the Skete of St. Basil.



The Holy Monastery of Simonopetra on Mt. Athos





SAINT SIMON
The founder of Simonopetra,
where Blessed Paisius stayed
with his disciples for a time.

The arsanas (dock)
of Simonopetra

ledges the Church's commandments in words but violates them in deed, has no humility, is too trusting of the Greek manuscripts of the Fathers, prefers philosophy to repentance and tears, forbids the cursing of heretics, and replaces the rule of prayer in church with the Prayer of Jesus.

Blessed Paisius, hearing all this as if he did not hear it, was longsuffering. Then Athanasius became inflamed with envy more than he could endure, and he wrote to him and sent a letter, which in the beginning had an appearance of friendly instruction, but further on contained many censures, reproaches, and much incorrect, vain thinking. Our Father received it and, examining it all with good disposition, went to his confessor, informed him of it, and read it to him. Then with his confessor he went to another older confessor of many, who after examining the letter was grieved and commanded Paisius to write a reply to him, clearly indicating his error and incorrect thinking; and if the monk did not then repent and ask forgiveness, he thought of accusing him at the Assembly of the Holy Mountain.

The Blessed one did as he was commanded by the spiritual fathers, and having clearly shown the monk's simplicity in 14 chapters, in which he also revealed his error and refuted his censure and slander, he sent these chapters to him. Here, among other things, Paisius wrote concerning the reading of the books of the Holy Fathers: "I beg you, Father, abandon your empty and vain idea of not reading the patristic books. I praise your way of life and reverence your ascetic labors and receive benefit from your being [on the Holy Mountain]. But to all your ascetic labors it is necessary to add understanding and discernment, lest all your labor be in vain. Wherefore, if you wish to be saved yourself and show your disciples the royal path, the doing of Christ's commandments, which lead to the Kingdom of Heaven, then cling with all your soul to the reading of books. It, together with asking questions of experienced spiritual fathers, will be an undeceiving teacher for you and your disciples, instructing you on the path of salvation. Otherwise, it is impossible to be saved. St. John Chrysostom says: 'It is impossible for anyone to be saved if he will not often take enjoyment in spiritual reading.' And St. Basil the Great says: 'Let the elder instruct the brethren in the understanding of Holy Scripture, and if he does not, he is one who gives sacrilege and false witness of God.' And the great Anastasius the Sinaite says: 'In everything that we say and do, we should have proof from Holy Scripture; otherwise, deceived by human imaginings, we shall fall away from the true path and fall into the abyss of perdition.' And again: 'It is indispensable for us to learn from Divine Scripture with fear and love, and to arouse ourselves and each other to keep in mind the word of

God.' Thus also do all the Saints teach us, arousing us to diligent and heartfelt reading of books. And do not say, Father, that one or two books is sufficient for instructing the soul. After all, even the bee collects honey not from one or two flowers only, but from many. Thus also he who reads the books of the Holy Fathers is instructed by one in faith or in right thinking, by another in silence and prayer, by another in obedience and humility and patience, by another in self-reproach and in love for God and neighbor; and, to speak briefly, from many books of the Holy Fathers a man is instructed in life according to the Gospel."

Concerning the abbreviation of his rule of prayer, Paisius wrote of the extreme difficulty of his life in the beginning on the Holy Mountain. Further he said: "All this I confessed to my spiritual father and other older confessors and told to my confessor. Because in my extreme infirmity I cannot keep to my rule, the thought came to me: I will return to Russia. But my confessor, encouraging me, said: 'No, child, do not leave the Holy Mountain where God called you; endure there a little the will of God. As for your rule of prayer, keep up as much as you can. Only, always thank God, and the Lord will not leave you. And your very thanksgiving in infirmity and want will be imputed to you by God in place of every rule.' And in accordance with his advice I kept my small rule and lived, rejoicing and thanking God in my infirmity, entreating His mercy, so that He would strengthen me to remain to the end of my life on this Holy Mountain of Athos."*

The Elder Athanasius, after reading Blessed Paisius' reply, acknowledged his sin, reproached himself, repented, and came to ask forgiveness. With joy Paisius forgave him, and having conversed with him in a friendly manner, with love he revealed to him God's will concerning his life with the brethren, and dismissed him in peace.

43. He moves temporarily to the Monastery of Simonopetra, and then returns to the Skete.

THUS PAISIUS remained in his Skete, and from day to day the number of brethren increased; already there were more than fifty, and in no way could he escape accepting those who with tearful and mighty entreaty importuned him to accept them under obedience. What did he not present to them, what did he not say, setting forth before their eyes the lack of room in the cells, and the labor in obediences, and the want of bodily necessities, and the

* Both quotes from Elder Paisius are in Chetverikov, I, pp. 74-75.

poverty in everything! But as much as he would meekly send them away, so much the more would they again and again, falling to his feet, weeping and lamenting, mightily entreat him to accept them. And so, being persuaded by their tears, as a father who was merciful and filled with love for others, he would accept them, trusting in the almighty Providence of God to provide for them in soul and body, as was said above.

Many of the venerable fathers advised him to occupy the monastery called Simonopetra, which was then empty (for it was in debt). Our Father accordingly presented a petition concerning this to the Assembly of the Holy Mountain, and immediately he was given a blessing to do this. And so, takhalf of the brethren, he moved to the Monastery, having heard only a little concerning its debt. But he had been there for just three months when the Turkish creditors, having heard that a community of monks had gathered in the Monastery, came immediately to demand the debt; and they took by force from the innocent one 700 dollars. And so the Elder, fearing the other creditors, returned again to the Skete.

44. Lack of room; Blessed Paisius decides to go to Vlachia.

REMAINING in the Skete, and seeing such a great crowding and pain for the brethren, our Father grieved and sorrowed greatly in soul, seeing the great difficulty of the place and the extreme inconvenience of such a like-minded assembly of the common life on the Holy Mountain, and seeing that there was no hope for improvement. And so, having taken counsel, he began to prepare for going away to Vlachia, to the land of Muntyansk. Having found out about this, the Most Holy Patriarch Seraphim and other venerable spiritual fathers of the Holy Mountain sorely grieved over his departure; and coming to him in the Skete, they exhorted and entreated him much not to leave the Holy Mountain. But when they discovered the extreme need of the monks, and their great want of room, and the sorrow of our Father, they said: "May God's will be done."

And the Elder fell to the feet of the Most Holy Patriarch, kissing them with many tears, and asked his blessing. Likewise, the Most Holy Patriarch wept also, and with much grief he blessed him, embracing and kissing his head, and departed to the Monastery in mourning. As for the Elder, he bade farewell to all the spiritual fathers, and from all he asked prayer for the journey and their blessing.

Next Issue: IV. Blessed Paisius in the Moldavian Monasteries of Dragomirna and Sekoul, 1763-1779.

Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan

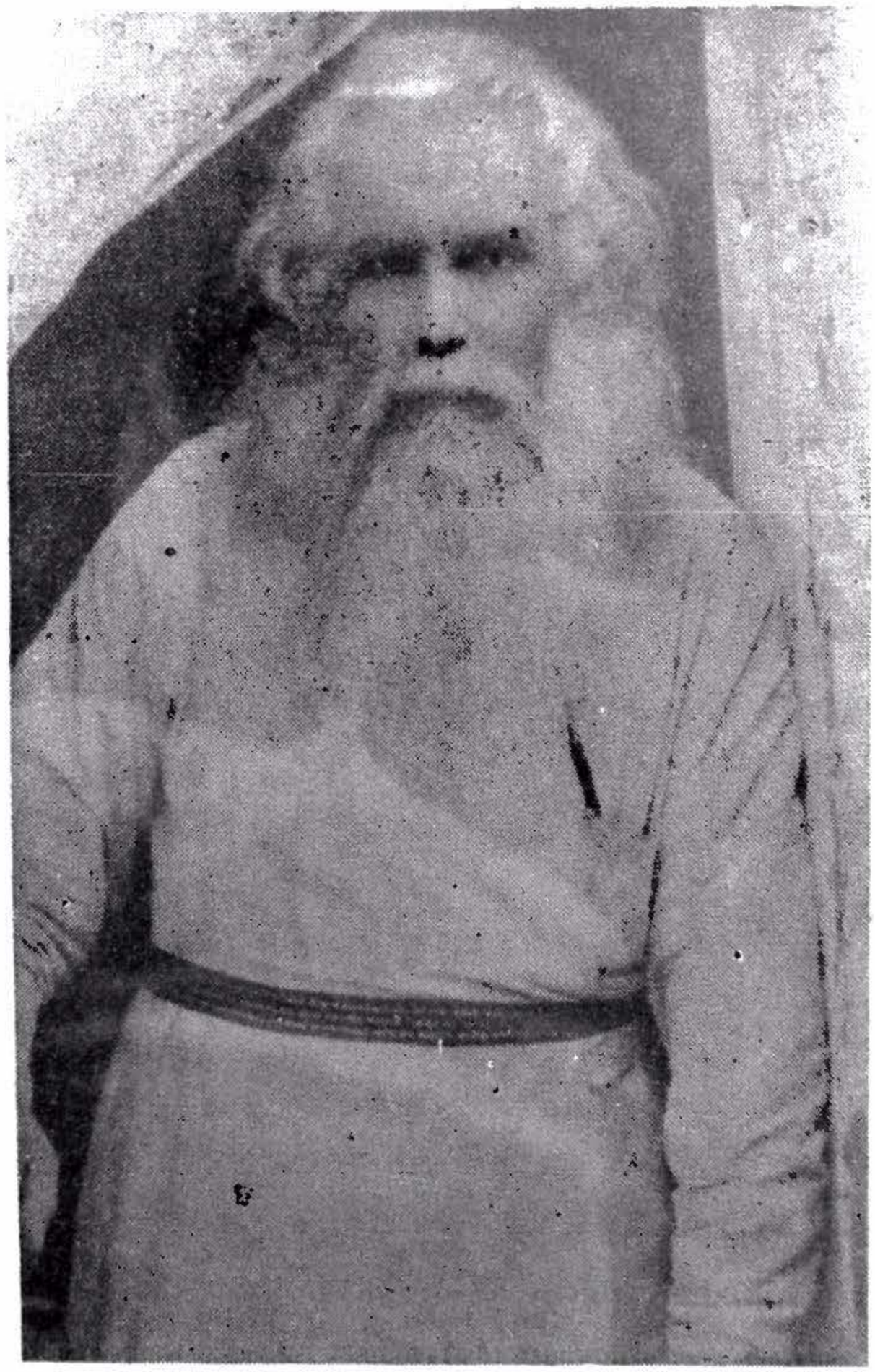
THE FIRST LOCUM TENENS OF PATRIARCH TIKHON*

BEFORE HIS DEATH Patriarch Tikhon left a document concerning his temporary successor, the Locum Tenens, who was to occupy the Patriarchal Throne until a new Patriarch could be freely elected for Russia. The Communist program which was being imposed upon much-suffering Holy Russia, and which was not actually atheistic but rather anti-theistic, had already made it extremely unlikely that such a free election could be held. In his choice of three successor hierarchs, the Martyr-Patriarch indicated the path for the Church to follow: these men were above all noted for their strict Orthodoxy of faith and boldness in confessing it, qualities which prepared them to become great confessors such as the Church had in the early catacomb times. The first of these pillars of firmness in unadulterated Orthodoxy was Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, a towering figure in the Russian Church and an inspirer of the Catacomb Church.

Born Constantine Smirnov on April 26, 1863, he graduated from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy in 1887. After marriage he was ordained priest, but soon he became a widower and was tonsured a monk and appointed head of an Orthodox Mission in Urmia. In 1904 he was consecrated Bishop of Gdov, a vicar of the Petersburg diocese, where he became spiritually very close to the great luminary of the 20th century, St. John of Kronstadt. The holy pastor was greatly attached to the young hierarch, and in his last will St. John asked that his funeral be served and that he be buried by none other than the young Bishop Cyril. When the Saint died in 1908, Bishop Cyril fulfilled this request with great love and care, placing the body in the coffin and being the chief celebrant in the funeral services that followed, even though there were many elder hierarchs present. St. John knew well and greatly respected the high spiritual caliber of Bishop Cyril.

* Sources in Russian: Rev. M. Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs,* vol. II, Jordanville, N.Y., 1957, and *The Condition of the Church in Soviet Russia,* Jerusalem, 1931; *A Pastoral Wreath to Fr. John of Kronstadt,* St. Petersburg, 1911; E. Lope, *Bishops-Confessors,* San Francisco, 1971; manuscript material from Alexei Rostov, Abbess Juliana, Prof. I. M. Andreev. In English: W. Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground,* 1917-1970, Oxford, 1970.

During the celebration of Theophany in Petersburg in 1909 Bishop Cyril revealed himself as an outstanding fighter for church truth and tradition. Under the influence of worldly "scientific" elements it was officially decreed that all water which was to be blessed for the feast in the Petersburg diocese must be boiled beforehand, and thus the great Agiasma had to be performed over steaming pots. One outspoken church organ of the time noted that: "More faith was shown in the firewood necessary to boil the water and kill the germs, than in God. Fortunately, however, not everyone stepped away from the anchor of our salvation, and in the same Petersburg the Lord preserved for his chosen ones a single bishop who did not agree to yield his faith for the sake of peace with the enemies of Christ's Church. If these notes ever see the light of print, let them preserve the name of this loyal servant of God and



METROPOLITAN CYRIL OF KAZAN
(Photograph taken in his tent during his exile)

During the 1917-18 All-Russian Church Council and the election of Patriarch Tikhon. From left to right: Metropolitan Cyril, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Patriarch Tikhon, and Metropolitan Arsenius of Novgorod.

Metropolitan Cyril when Vicar Bishop of the St. Petersburg Diocese, at the time of the funeral and burial of Saint John of Kronstadt, his close friend.

archpastor, for the strengthening of faith and piety in my overburdened brethren. Cyril of Gdov is the name of this bishop. May his name be blessed from generation to generation." Defying the warnings of the police, Bishop Cyril blessed the water of the Neva River at the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra right through a hole in the ice. The local police, however, took measures to ensure that no one was allowed to take water from the "Jordan."

In the same year of 1909, apparently in connection with this incident, Bishop Cyril was transferred to the diocese of Tambov. Here he was entirely responsible for the preparations for the canonization of St. Pitirim of Tambov, which occurred in 1914 with great solemnity in his cathedral. After this he became an archbishop.

At the time of the Revolution he was one of the leading hierarchs of the entire Russian Church, taking an important part in the All-Russian Council of 1917-1918. His report to this Council on "Public Education," which he prepared after dealing with the Provisional Government and talking to Kerensky himself, revealed the true anti-Christian plans of those who had overthrown the Tsar and hoped to raise future generations without the Church's influence.

When appointed Metropolitan of Kazan he was immediately arrested (in 1919), so that he reached his See only after serving a sentence in prison in 1920. After several months in Kazan he was arrested again for his involvement with the American Relief Organization which supplied food to those who were starving due to the famine caused by the Revolution. In this work Metropolitan Cyril had many devoted helpers, one of whom, the late Abbess Juliana (whose particular duty was to supply food and help to imprisoned bishops), has left an account which illuminates the catacomb circumstances under which the true archpastors of Christ had to tend their flocks at this time:

"In about 1919 Bishop Gurias was arrested; he was prorector [of the Academy] in Kazan when Metropolitan Cyril was rector. Therefore the Metropolitan [who was in Moscow] called me in connection with sending some things to Vladika Gurias. As it turned out, he had agreed with him beforehand as to how the Holy Gifts were to be sent to him in prison. For this he gave me a little box with what seemed to be small white pieces of bread, and he said that these should be registered among the other supplies which were to be given. I was upset at taking the Holy Gifts with me, and in general at the idea of carrying them at all, and I told this to Vladika. To this he answered me: 'What business is that of yours; I am sending you.' But having thought a little, he offered me to take the Holy Gifts from him early in the morning on the same day when I would be going with the packages for Vladika Gurias

in the Butyrka prison. This was done. Soon I was going with packages for Vladika Cyril himself, but not for long. In 1920 Metropolitan Cyril was in the Taganka prison; in the same prison at that time, perhaps even in the same cell, were Vladikas Theodore and Gurias. In the Taganka prison the old rules were still in effect: for good behavior prisoners were called or went over to the category of the 'reformed,' and they enjoyed certain privileges. In the Taganka prison there were five prisoners in this category: Metropolitan Cyril, Archbishop Theodore, Bishop Gurias, Alex. Dim. Samarin, and Vladimir Theodorovich Djunkovsky. Besides the usual general visits, they were allowed once a week on a certain day to have visitors with the grating lifted. Usually, at the general visits. when many people were speaking with the prisoners through a double grating. it was almost impossible to converse because of the noise and shouting. Besides that, these meetings lasted only five minutes. On the other hand, visits to the "reformed" lasted for fifteen minutes, and one could even give things right into the hands of the prisoners. Under these circumstances I had to speak with and give things to Metropolitan Cyril many times. When the Metropolitan was in exile we were able to help him not only with parcels but also by furnishing church service books."

Protopresbyter Michael Polsky gives a few words as to the further fate of Metropolitan Cyril: "At the interrogations of the GPU, discussions are conducted on general topics, and religious disputes are even devised. If your understanding and knowledge are discovered, not to mention opinions on the activities of the authorities, you become a definitely harmful individual. Fortunate only is he who can pretend to be stupid, unable to reply to anything. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, during the years of his endless exile, had two weeks of freedom in Moscow itself. The GPU agent demanded of him that he exert influence on the Patriarch either in the question of the reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury or in some other question. I don't remember which. The Metropolitan several times suffered in silence the petty probes of the agent. but finally he said to him: 'Oh. what a smart one you are!' The maddened agent gave Metropolitan Cyril only an hour to get ready. The Metropolitan was sent first to Ust-Sysolsk, and then, in the spring of 1925. to some dense forest at which he arrived only after two weeks of travelling in a boat on a river. He was not given anything to eat, he was left to sleep in the cold outside the forest cabins in which the agents themselves lodged, he was dragged by the beard and mocked in such a way that he began to ask death for himself. He spent a year under the rule of a Communist in a forest where there were only two hunting cabins." (*Condition of the Church in Soviet Russia,* pp. 42-43.)

In 1924, when Metropolitan Cyril had refused to join the Living Church, the head of the secret police, Tuchkov, had promised him that he would "rot in prison"; and indeed, for the rest of his life he went from prison to exile to yet more remote exile. Being in exile in 1925 when Patriarch Tikhon died, he was unable to undertake the responsibilities of Locum Tenens, and this position fell to the Patriarch's third choice, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa.

ORTHODOX BIBLIOGRAPHY

OPTINA MONASTERY AND ITS EPOCH, by I. M. Kontzevitch. Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 13361, 1970 (1973). 604 pp. $10.00. (In Russian.)

WHEN PROFESSOR Kontzevitch wrote his already classic work on *The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit in Ancient Russia* (Paris, 1952), he had planned that it would be the first part of a trilogy on the spiritual tradition of Holy Russia, the next two volumes to be on Elder Paisius Velichkovsky and the Elders of Optina. This project was left uncompleted at his death in 1965, but from his many papers and notes for the third volume the present compilation has been made, and it is a worthy memorial to this rare representative of true Orthodox scholarship.

By its very nature the book is not a continuous narrative history of Optina Monastery during the century of its flourishing (to its closing in 1927), but rather a compilation of materials on the God-bearing Elders and those whom they influenced. Comparatively little space is devoted to the earlier Elders — Moses, Anthony, Leonid, Macarius — as well as Ambrose and Joseph, on whom separate monographs exist and, God willing, may be reprinted before long, in order that maximum attention might be devoted to the later Elders about whom almost nothing has been written — Barsanuphius, Anatole the Younger, and Nectarius; the last-named the author knew personally, and it was he who inspired his interest in the Russian spiritual tradition and blessed his studies in it. Important chapters and sections are also devoted to figures who were influenced by the Elders and entered into the Optina tradition: the brothers Kireevsky, Constantine Leontiev, Bishop Jonah of Hankow, Fr. Basil Shustin, Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky, and others.

When the latter's Substitute, Metropolitan Sergius, issued his infamous "Declaration" in 1927, Metropolitan Cyril was in exile in a remote village in Turukhan in the far north, beyond the Arctic Circle, suffering from a kidney disease. From there he sent outspoken letters both to Metropolitan Sergius and to Bishop Damascene of Glukhov (who was in exile in the same region) breaking off communion with Metr. Sergius, declaring his acts null and void, and statingthat he had overstepped his authority by instituting a whole new church policy without even consulting the Locum Tenens. Bishop Damascene's secretary at that time, E. Lope, who recently published one such letter, also states that "in 1931 all the bishops in exile recognized Metr. Cyril, and not Metr. Sergius, as the head of the Orthodox Church" (*Bishops-Confessors*, 35).

According to information received from the Soviet Union in 1937, Metr. Cyril was killed in exile at that time on direct orders from Moscow, at the beginning of the Ezhov purges, as a "chief inspirer" of the Catacomb Church.

A long chapter is devoted to Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, who shines forth here as a true representative of the best Orthodox tradition — the tradition of St. Seraphim, Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky, and Optina — and the champion and leader of the fight against the secular and heterodox influences which were attacking Russian Orthodoxy at that time. The vain attempts of Berdyaev and other rationalist scholars to discredit Metropolitan Philaret as supposedly the representative of a different kind of Orthodoxy, are nicely disposed of in the book.

Extremely valuable is the author's introduction on the very phenomenon of *starchestvo,* or spiritual direction by God-bearing Elders, as it was practiced at Optina, which he defined as the fulfillment of the "prophetic service" in the Church of Christ. This chapter is all the more valuable in that with the death of the last Optina Elder in 1928. this phenomenon for all practical purposes may be said to have disappeared from the Church, and Professor Kontzevitch was one of the few individuals still alive in recent years who had witnessed this phenomenon at first hand, had had experience also of the counter-phenomenon of "false-elders" who cause such harm by fancying themselves to be God-bearing, and had the theological education and mind to write clearly about these matters. with frequent reference to the patristic sources.

Parts of the book will appear in English in future issues of *The Orthodox Word.*

Saint Herman Calendar

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